

This newsletter is designed to facilitate watershed and resource planning, to provide education on the importance and need for natural resource protection, and to bring together local people and partners for successful planning efforts in Illinois. Each edition of *Watershed Planning and You* explores activities within a different NRCS Field Office District (FOD), but the issues, tools, and strategies discussed here offer guidance to resource professionals and watershed planning groups statewide. This issue highlights efforts in FOD3 in northeast Illinois.



People improving the natural resources where they live and work

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

www.il.nrcs.usda.gov

Volume 2, 2002

Water Quality Improvements With Streambank Stabilization in LaSalle County

LaSalle County is seeing the benefits of local streambank stabilization efforts. With assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), landowners are finding streambank stabilization to be an effective and viable method to address concerns with streambank erosion, sedimentation, and water quality.



LaSalle County Resource Conservationist Matt Stafford explains the benefits of streambank stabilization to a tour group at the Clark Debolt farm near Ottawa, IL.

Little Vermilion River Watershed

An inventory of erosion and sedimentation in the Little Vermilion River Watershed in western LaSalle County showed streambank erosion to be a considerable, but treatable, water quality problem. During the fall and winter of 2001, NRCS/SWCD staff gathered field data for all forms of erosion from 55 randomly selected stream segments of the river and its tributaries. NRCS Resource Soil Scientist Roger Windhorn analyzed the data and found that approximately 7,610 tons of soil erode from the banks of the Little Vermilion each year. "Streambank erosion is the source of approximately 9% of the total sediment load delivered to the outlet of the watershed," said Windhorn.

Opportunities to address local streambank erosion concerns on private land soon followed. Little Vermilion River Watershed Planning Committee member Keith McLaughlin and neighbor Mike Sitterly approached NRCS/SWCD staff looking for ways to address streambank erosion. High flows from snowmelt and late winter

rains caused severe erosion along a half-mile stretch of the Little Vermilion on their property. On one curve of the river, a shelf of sod 4 feet wide and 150 feet long had fallen and was laying at the water's edge.

NRCS/SWCD staff surveyed the channel while Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) Streambank Stabilization Engineer Jim Jensen studied the problems and recommended practices to accommodate variable conditions along the river. Funds from IDA's Streambank Stabilization Restoration Program (SSRP) paid 90% of the cost of installation.

Installed practices include two 45-foot stream barbs made of rock riprap. The barbs extend from the bank upstream at 30 degree angles to create an area of "dead flow," encouraging deposition of sediment at the base of the bank and helping vegetation to establish. Seven 15-foot bendway weirs were also installed. Also made of rock riprap, the weirs divert stream flows away from eroding banks. Two of the higher banks were stabilized with stone toe protection along the base to absorb the stream's erosive energy, and allow sediment to build up behind it.

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Watershed Planning Workshops

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of northern Illinois will host two **Watershed Planning Workshops**. Both workshops will cover the same material but provide different location and day. The first is on Wednesday March 12, 2003 at the Pitstick Pavilion in Ottawa IL from 9:00 to 3:30. The second is on Saturday, April 12, 2003 at the Elgin Community High School from 9:00 to 3:30. The workshops are designed to meet the needs of planning committee members who coordinate with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).

Topics will focus on the human aspects of watershed planning. With over forty watershed planning groups in northern and central Illinois, planning groups have had a variety of experiences and we hope to provide the opportunity for committees to mingle and share information. Two instructional session tracks, one for beginning watershed planning committees and one for

committees with more experience, will be provided. The session tracks will include:

- Models for sustainability in citizen-based organizations
- Grants and funding sources
- Public relations
- Round table discussions-lessons learned
- Education and outreach
- Planning implementation, now what?
- Working with local governments
- Plan implementation "from the shelf to the ground"

We hope these topics will help planning committee members address basic organizational issues for sustainability, effective education & outreach, and plan implementation. A \$10.00 fee is requested to cover lunch.

We hope to see you there!

For more information please contact Jim or Rick at the North Cook NRCS/SWCD Office at (847) 468-0071.

A Note from the FOD 3 ASTC...



The 2002 Farm Bill is now in effect and with it, Watershed Planning groups across the state can look to new opportunities to address watershed issues through NRCS conservation programs. NRCS technical and resource planning support for conservation on a watershed scale will continue, as always, to serve planning groups across the state.

Increased funding for programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) will provide unprecedented opportunities and financial assistance for installation of conservation practices that encourage environmentally friendly land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, and wildlife habitat management. EQIP is now open to landowners across the state rather than the focusing on priority areas.

Other NRCS programs will also offer new opportunities to address conservation on a watershed scale. The new Conservation Security Program (CSP) will offer support to landowners who already practice good stewardship and will offer incentives to others to improve and increase the soil and water protecting practices on their land. Landowners will also find opportunities with the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Farmland Protection Program (FPP), and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).

Your NRCS Field Staff is ready to work with your planning group to discuss ways to enhance conservation in your watershed.

Tessa Chadwick

*NRCS Assistant State Conservationist
Field Operations District 3*



Directory

NRCS State Office

PH: (217) 353-6600

FOD 1 Office

southern Illinois

PH: (618) 993-5396

FOD 2 Office

central Illinois

PH: (217) 492-5097

FOD 3 Office

northeastern Illinois

PH: (815) 937-3233

FOD 4 Office

northwestern Illinois

PH: (309) 342-5138

To locate your county contact, click here or visit the Illinois NRCS Web site at: www.il.nrcs.usda.gov.

WATERSHED PROFILE

Fox River

[Click here for a map of the
Fox River Watershed](#)

Description

The Fox River Basin encompasses 1,720 square miles in northeastern Illinois. Between the Illinois-Wisconsin state line and Algonquin, IL the slope is very flat and the river's main channel is ill defined as it passes through a series of lakes and marshes. Most notable of the lake series is the Fox Chain O'Lakes, one of the nation's busiest inland waterways. The valley between Algonquin and Aurora is narrow and sharply defined by bluffs with a narrow or entirely absent floodplain. The watershed contains 65% of the state's dry gravel prairies, 86% of its gravel hill prairies, 41% of its marshes, 42% of its sedge meadows, 72% of its graminoid bog community, and 100% of the state's low shrub bogs and forested bogs.

Counties

Six main counties encompass the Fox River watershed: DeKalb, Kane, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle and McHenry. Small portions of the watershed rest in Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Lee, and Will.

Federal Congressional Districts

8, 11, 13, 14 and 16

IL Senatorial Districts

21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, and 42

IL Representative Districts

41, 42, 45, 50, 52, 53, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 70, 84

Population and Landuse

The watershed is home to 11% of the state's population with Lake, Kane and McHenry among the ten most populous counties in Illinois. DeKalb, Kendall and LaSalle counties have 89-94% agriculture and 4-6% urban land use. In contrast, Lake County has less than 25% agriculture and 42% urban land use.

Watershed Organization

Fox River Ecosystem Partnership; Dr. Paul Anderson, President

Mission Statement

"Our vision for the Fox River watershed is to balance all the uses and demands on our natural resources while preserving and enhancing a healthy environment."

Lead County Field Office

Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District
Contact: Barbara Sheffer
545 S. Randall Rd.
St. Charles, IL 60174
630.584.7961 Ext. 3
Barbara.Sheffer@il.usda.gov

Watershed Planning Document

Integrated Management Plan for the Fox River in Illinois

Step in Planning Process

Implementation

General Resource Concerns

- **Recreation:** Enhance year-round, land- and water-based recreation by working with area communities to inventory and evaluate public access to the watershed and dam modification or removal.
- **Habitat:** Develop a comprehensive program to identify, protect, and restore natural habitats to promote diversity of fish and wildlife and to restore ecosystem functions.
- **Land-Use:** Protect the watershed through urban revitalization, innovative development standards, open space preservation, public land acquisition, and voluntary preservation of agricultural lands.
- **Water Quality:** Develop strategies to preserve and enhance ground and surface water quality and quantity to provide adequate drinking water supplies and natural habitat.
- **Stormwater:** Improve stormwater management to reduce soil erosion, mitigate flooding, and improve stormwater quality.
- **Education:** Develop an effective education and awareness program to inform watershed residents.

Accomplishments

- Recognized in 1996 as an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Ecosystem Partnership. The Partnership is incorporated as a 501(c)3.
- During a year-long process developed the partnership's planning document, *Integrated Watershed Plan for the Fox River in Illinois*.
- Secured over \$2 million in projects to implement the watershed plan under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).
- Leveraged over \$1 million in IDNR C2000 funding grants since 1998.
- Publish *Downstream*, a bi-monthly membership newsletter, and *Fox River News*, a quarterly info-newsletter mailed throughout the watershed.
- Developed a 5-year implementation strategy.

Visit the webpage at www.FoxRiverEcosystem.org.

Partnership Champions

NRCS/SWCD



**Mathew
Stafford**

LaSalle County Resource Conservationist (RC) Matt Stafford has always been tuned into nature,

the outdoors, and the wise use of natural resources. From childhood summers spent in the woods and streams to frequent canoe explorations of the Fox River, the vivid images of streams, nature and the environment still ring dear to Matt's heart.

A Wedron, IL native, Matt graduated from Serena High School. Matt earned an Associate Degree from Illinois Valley Community College, then went on to Eastern Illinois University (EIU), earning a BS in Geography with an Environmental Science Concentration in 1999.

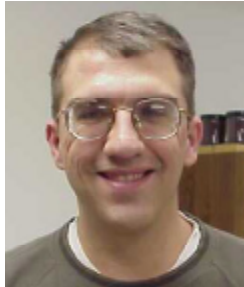
Matt worked as a research assistant for both EIU and the Embarras River Management Association (ERMA). Research interests focused on land use evaluation in the Hurricane Creek Watershed (Pilot Watershed Project) and stream meander migration rates in the Embarras River Watershed. In September 1999, Matt became full-time Watershed Coordinator for ERMA, where he coordinated efforts to protect the 1.5 million acre watershed in southeastern Illinois.

Matt returned home to LaSalle County in August 2000 when he accepted the RC position with the LaSalle County SWCD. Matt is proud to be part of LaSalle County's well-established conservation initiative and the Little Vermillion River Watershed Project developed through the SWCD and IEPA's Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) program.



Stakeholders

Brian Mascal



Brian Mascal currently serves as Co-Chair of the Little Vermillion River Watershed Local Planning Committee, a committee that formed and began meeting approximately two years ago. A life-long resident of LaSalle County, Brian is enthused to contribute to a group that has the potential to make a positive impact on the local environment.

Brian's interest in environmental matters began long before he became involved in locally-led watershed planning. He has a BS in Environmental Health from Illinois State University and a Masters degree in industrial safety from Northern Illinois University. He puts that education to work as the Environmental Health & Safety Manager for Del Monte Foods Plant #112/208 in Mendota, IL.

Mascal enjoys his work with the Little Vermillion River Watershed Planning Committee. "We have a great team comprised of many different stakeholders who have come together to work toward the betterment of the environment," Mascal said. "It is a fascinating process of evaluating the conditions, collecting data, and ultimately coming up with a plan to make the best use of the natural resources in the watershed for all affected. It is rewarding to know we can make a difference."

Brian resides in Streator with his wife, Amy Jo, and their two boys, Noah and Grant. The Mascal family is expecting their third child in early December 2002.

Franklin Jasiek, D.D.S.



Little Vermillion River Watershed Planning Committee Co-Chair Franklin Jasiek was born and raised in LaSalle, IL. He learned at a young age to

appreciate the Little Vermillion River and surrounding areas where he hiked, fished, and camped. It was no surprise that he returned to the area after attending the University of Illinois College of Dentistry. Dr. Jasiek settled with his family in the Illinois Valley near the Little Vermillion River, because he wanted his five children to experience the natural beauty surrounding the River Valley. He has practiced dentistry in LaSalle for the last 34 years.

Ten years ago, through the vigilance of his children, Franklin and his wife Nancy learned of the declining natural resource base in the Little Vermillion River Valley. The Jasieks became involved in the formation of SOLVE (Save Our Little Vermillion Environment). SOLVE promotes stewardship and encourages conservation practices to help preserve the Little Vermillion. Dr. Jasiek and Nancy are also very active in the Little Vermillion River Watershed Planning Committee to help preserve the environment surrounding the river on a much larger basis, the watershed scale. The Planning Committee works closely with the LaSalle County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) program to help address local resource issues. "I take great pride knowing that our work on this committee will benefit the resources of the Little Vermillion River Watershed and the Illinois River Watershed today and for future generations," says Jasiek.

Calendar of Events



March 12, 2003

Watershed Planning Workshop

Pitstick Pavilion, Ottawa IL
Contact Jim or Rick at the North Cook NRCS/SWCD office at (847) 468-0071. See page 2 for more information.

March 10-12, 2003

2003 Farming on the Edge: Finding the Balance

American Farmland Trust National Conference
Asilomar Conference Center on the Monterey Peninsula, Pacific Grove CA.
Contact Doris Mittasch at (413) 586-9330.
www.farmland.org.

April 12, 2003

Watershed Planning Workshop

Elgin High School, Elgin IL
Contact Jim or Rick at the North Cook NRCS/SWCD office at (847) 468-0071. See page 2 for more information.



Watersheds on the Web

Adopt-a-Watershed: www.adopt-a-watershed.org

Center for Watershed Protection: www.cwp.org

Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC)
www.ctic.purdue.edu/ctic/ctic.html

Des Plaines Watershed Alliance:
www.desplaineswatershed.org/alliance/links.html

DuPage River, Big Rock Creek and Blackberry Creek:
www.theconservationfoundation.org

EPA Surf Your Watershed: www.epa.gov/surf

Fox River Ecosystem Partnership:
www.foxriverecosystem.org

Salt Creek Watershed Network Releases Publication

Earlier this year, the Salt Creek Watershed Network (SCWN) completed a watershed planning document titled "Restoring Balance." Restoring Balance lists the SCWN's vision and concerns as well as action items that the group intends to accomplish.

In March of 1998, the Salt Creek Watershed Network formed as a grass roots organization to bring people together who were already working individually to improve the creek. The formation of the Salt Creek Watershed Network gave these people an opportunity to combine their efforts into "a regional perspective to ensure long term and watershed-wide improvements." The eight major concerns of the network are water quality, stream bank maintenance, habitat, flooding, land use, public policy, public awareness/education, and recreation.

Salt Creek is a tributary of the Des Plaines River in northeastern Illinois. The Salt Creek watershed includes much of northern and western Cook County and eastern DuPage County. Although heavily urban, some open spaces exist along the stream and in forest preserves for recreational and flood control uses. Thirty-two municipalities with more than 500,000 people lie within this 103,440-acre watershed.

Recently, SCWN was awarded a grant for \$10,000 from the DuPage Community Foundation to implement surface water monitoring, education, and awareness program. For more information, visit the web site at <http://www.saltcreek.org>.

*Submitted by Keith Eichorst
NRCS Community Planner*

Illinois Watershed Management Clearinghouse:
web.aces.uiuc.edu/watershed

Kishwaukee River Watershed:
www.mcdef.org/kwke.htm

Salt Creek Watershed: www.saltcreek.org

Silver Creek Watershed:
www.silvercreekwatershed.com

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service:
www.il.nrcs.usda.gov

Wisconsin-Illinois Upper Des Plaines River
Ecosystem Partnership:
homepage.interaccess.com/~niwca/desplaines.htm

Water Quality Improvements... (continued from page 1)

Work on the project was completed in October 2001. The soil-saving benefits of the practices were evident immediately, as the stream flows were diverted away from the eroding banks.

Fox River Watershed

Several other projects were completed this fall in LaSalle County in the Fox River Watershed. The first rock-riffles were installed on the Clark Debolt farm near Ottawa, IL. These riffles extend across Crookedleg Creek, and add 1 to 2.5 feet of height to the existing riffles in the channel. The riffles create a series of flat pools that stabilize the grade of the channel, with the rock riffles dropping the stream flow into the next pool downstream. Best of all, these riffles create a wonderful sound, and improve the creek's appearance with a natural look. SSRP paid 100% of installation cost, since the project serves to demonstrate a new practice in the county. The project location is 1 mile south of U.S. 52 and 1 mile east of IL Route 23. It can be viewed from the bridges on North 36th Road (look north), and on East 18th Road (look west).

Elsewhere in the Fox Creek Watershed, neighbors Alan Adams and Scott Jesseman experienced problems with eroding meanders on Somonauk Creek along the property line. Together, the neighbors worked with the LaSalle County NRCS/SWCD to plan and install a series of 12 bendway weirs and stream barbs to deflect the currents back toward the center of the channel. 90% of project installation cost was funded through SSRP.



Bendway weirs divert stream flows from eroding banks.

For more information, contact the LaSalle County Soil and Water Conservation District at 815-433-0514 or e-mail Paul.Youngstrum@il.usda.gov, or Mathew.Stafford@il.usda.gov.



Organizing your efforts.....

Organizational Considerations in Watershed Planning

To achieve your watershed vision, your watershed planning group will need to establish an organizational structure that effectively directs efforts and coordinates duties. Sometimes as groups form, these organizational structures need to change in order for watershed initiatives to work better.

For most watersheds, a steering committee forms and then this steering committee recruits a technical advisory committee. As long as the size of each committee remains between 5 and 15 people, most work and decisions can be handled effectively within these committees. But as anyone who has participated in committees knows, getting a large number of individuals (e.g. over 15) to work together can slow down your efficiency and take away from your watershed efforts. Amending your organizational structure may be the best way to go.

Watershed groups with higher numbers of participants may need to form additional committees in addition to the basic steering and technical advisory committees. To get a handle on roles and responsibilities, let's define examples of different types of committees:

- ✓ steering committee
- ✓ executive committee
- ✓ planning committee
- ✓ technical advisory committee
- ✓ functional subcommittees

The steering committee usually consists of a group of watershed representatives who provide collective guidance and act as decision-makers. We can define this committee as drivers who voice their concerns, are making things happen, and are basically the reason why watershed activities are taking place. If the steering committee is too large to accomplish all tasks as a whole, other committees may form.

An executive committee is an example of one committee that can develop out of the steering committee. Executive committee members are usually steering committee members themselves. Executive members generally have the leadership capability, time and resources to make quicker decisions and take action faster than the steering committee as a whole. The executive committee, however, should remain accountable to the steering committee's concerns.

A separate planning committee might also be needed in watershed groups with higher participation rates. The planning committee should consist of steering committee members who are responsible for starting and creating the watershed planning process and plan documentation.

(continued next page)

A technical advisory committee (TAC) is usually an entirely separate group of individuals whose function is to provide advice to planning/executive/steering committee(s). A TAC usually consists of soil conservationists, water quality specialists, biologists, professional planners and others whose expertise is needed. The TAC role is not to decide on what needs to get done, but to recommend alternatives that the steering/executive/planning committees may need to act upon their concerns.

Functional subcommittees are subcommittees to either the planning/executive/steering or technical advisory committees. Functional subcommittees deal with specific working functions or objectives. Advantages of functional subcommittees is that they typically focus on specific issues and can typically get specific work tasks completed more efficiently than in whole committees. Functional subcommittees, however, must insure that they stay on track with committee concerns to which they are answerable.

The most important point for your organizational structure, however, is picking the structure your group feels most comfortable with, and one that accomplishes your watershed objectives.

*Submitted by Keith Eichorst
NRCS Community Planner*

Funding Sources for Illinois Conservation Projects



Looking for resources to implement a conservation-related project?

A summary of grant information is available to assist you in locating these resources. The summary can be used by metropolitan and non-metropolitan local units of government, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, and individuals to identify funding or other financial incentives for conservation-related projects. The summary is located on the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) web site at:

<http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/engineer/GRANTS.pdf>.

For more information, please contact your local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service office or Soil and Water Conservation District.

News from the Fox



The Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP) is a not-for-profit organization focusing on the natural resources and environmental health of the Fox River watershed. Formed under the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Ecosystem Partnership program in 1996, FREP currently has over 100 members throughout the watershed. In 1998, the Partnership published *The Integrated Management Plan for the Fox River in Illinois*. The vision of this plan is to balance all of the uses and demands on the natural resources of the watershed while preserving and enhancing a healthy environment. Six committees: Education, Water Quality, Agriculture, Lakes, Recreation and Habitat are working to oversee implementation of this plan.

Partnership meetings are held bi-monthly to conduct business and focus on a speaker or topic pertinent to the watershed. Locations are moved around the watershed to encourage attendance and provide an opportunity to discover the watershed. Topics have covered groundwater, wetland studies, USGS studies, and legislative focus.

In alternate months, informal brown-bag-lunch networking meetings are held to highlight various watershed projects. Brown bags have focused on a dam removal and stream restoration project, native plantings for stream corridors, funding opportunities, and dam issues within the watershed.

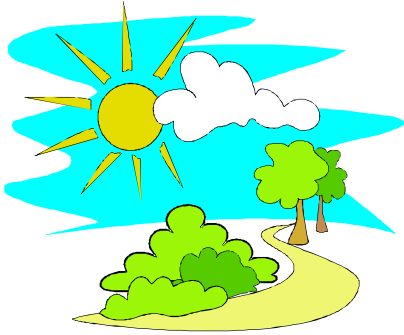
A number of sub-watershed groups are active within the watershed such as Nippersink Creek and Boone Creek (McHenry County), Blackberry and Waubensee (Kane and Kendall Counties), and the Big Rock/Little Rock (Kane and DeKalb Counties). Friends of the Fox River oversees a River Monitoring Network, which trains teachers and provides equipment for classrooms of students to sample the macroinvertebrates of the river as an indicator of water quality.

Since 1996, FREP has assisted its members/partners in obtaining over \$3 million in grant funds in support of projects that meet the implementation goals of the management plan. In 2000, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources recognized FREP as the first "Outstanding Partnership of the Year."

The Partnership has developed a "Tool-Kit" to help stakeholders become acquainted with the *Watershed Management Plan*. The Tool-Kit binder contains copies of the watershed plan, resource contacts, grant resources, and a plan summary included. Tool-Kit information is also available on the FREP webpage. The *Watershed Management Plan* to date has been endorsed by over 30 entities. Recently, a 5-year strategy plan was developed to focus on the implementation phase of the *Watershed Plan*.

Learn more about Fox River Ecosystem Partnership at www.FoxRiverEcosystem.org or contact Becky Hoag, foxriverinfo@aol.com, 630.482.9157 or Barbara Sheffer, Barbara.Sheffer@il.usda.gov, 630.584.7961 Ext. 3.

Natural Resources Conservation Service
2118 W. Park Court
Champaign, IL 61821



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Highlights:

**Water Quality
Improvements in LaSalle
County**

**Fox River
Watershed Profile**

**Organizational
Considerations in
Watershed Planning**



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